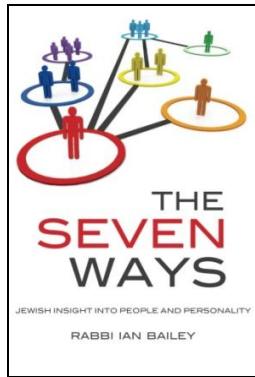


Where my Psych Textbook Went Wrong: Making Sense of Not Making Sense

Psychology textbooks and articles repeatedly boil down religion to something that can give people hope to the despondent and support when tragedy strikes. Judaism has much, much more to offer, and to take a reductionist approach and to be forced to provide immediate, tangible, rational reasons for each law and text will ruin its full breadth and depth.



The esoteric law of The Red Heifer in the book of Numbers speaks to this issue. It is deemed a *chok* by the Jewish sages, one which we cannot make basic, rational sense of[1] and that we would not have thought of on our own; we do it, because it is simply a decree of The King.

In our world we demand reasons for why we do things. The overtones of what we are taught are to believe that texts and rules come from selfishly-motivated patriarchal authority figures.

Sometimes, we must simply follow G-d and our leaders.

We are taught to analyze, question, and make sense of the information we are handed, and that is a wonderful approach. But underlying these behaviors there must be a healthy faith in G-d and trust in a minimal number of our leaders.



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[1] By this I mean laws against stealing, murder, and the like-laws that we can make some rational sense of. They are laws that we would have thought of on our own.